

## Message Text

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67

ACTION SS-25

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P 071830Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8217

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ATHENS 2693

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GR, TU

SUBJECT: GREEK POSITION ON LEGAL STATUS OF AND TURKISH  
INTENTIONS TOWARD ISLANDS OF EASTERN AEGEAN

REF: STATE 077283

1. IN RESPONSE TO AN OFFER TO ELUCIDATE GREEK POSITION ON  
LEGAL STATUS OF ISLANDS IN EASTERN AEGEAN, AMBASSADOR,  
ACCOMPANIED BY POLMIL OFFICER, CALLED ON FONOFF DIR GEN FOR  
POLITICAL AFFAIRS TZOUNIS EVENING OF APRIL 4. TZOUNIS MADE  
CLEAR THE GOG VIEW THAT A FULL APPRECIATION BY THE USG OF  
THE COMPLEX LEGAL/HISTORICAL QUESTIONS UNDERLYING THE CURRENT  
TENSION BETWEEN GREECE AND TURKEY CONCERNING THESE ISLANDS  
WAS ESSENTIAL TO COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING OF THE DIMENSIONS  
OF THE PROBLEM. HE EXPLAINED THAT THE ISLANDS OF THE  
EASTERN AEGEAN FELL INTO THREE GROUPS. THE FIRST, AND  
NORTHERNMOST, GROUP INCLUDED SAMOTHRACE, LEMNOS, IMBROS,  
TENEDOS AND THE RABBIT ISLANDS, ALL DEMILITARIZED BY THE  
SAME PROVISION, ARTICLE 4, OF THE LAUSANNE CONVENTION ON  
THE TURKISH STRAITS OF 1923 WHICH DEMILITARIZED THE STRAITS.  
THE MONTREUX CONVENTION OF 1936 REPLACED THE LAUSANNE CONVENTION  
AND ABOLISHED THE REQUIREMENT THAT THE STRAITS BE DEMILITARIZED  
BUT WAS SILENT ON THE STATUS OF THE ISLANDS.

2. TZOUNIS NOTED THAT THE DEMILITARIZED STATUS OF LEMNOS  
WAS DISCUSSED IN NATO IN 1969 WHEN GREECE PROPOSED THAT THE  
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ISLAND'S AIRPORT BE DESIGNATED TO RECEIVE FRIENDLY FORCES

IN TIME OF A NATO CRISIS OR WAR. TURKEY OBJECTED, CLAIMING THAT THE ISLAND WAS DEMILITARIZED BY VIRTUE OF THE LAUSANNE CONVENTION ON THE STRAITS OF 1923. TZOUNIS, THEN GREEK AMBASSADOR IN ANKARA, WAS INSTRUCTED TO POINT OUT TO THE GOT THAT THE LAUSANNE CONVENTION HAD BEEN SUPERSEDED BY THE MONTREUX CONVENTION OF 1936. AFTER STUDYING THE SITUATION, THE GOT REPLIED THAT THEE WERE SUBSTITUTIONS AND SUBSTITUTIONS, SOME IN TOTO AND SOME PARTIAL, AND THAT MONTREUX ONLY PARTLY REPLACED LAUSANNE. TZOUNIS RECALLED HOW HIS RESEARCH IN THE GREEK EMBASSY FILES UNEARTHED A STATEMENT BY THE TURKISH FOREIGN MINISTER MR. RUSTU ARAS, TO THE GRAND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (GNA) AT THE TIME THE GOT SOUGHT RATIFICATION OF THE MONTREUX CONVENTION. ARAS SPECIFICALLY SAID THAT THE ISLANDS IN QUESTION COULD BE RE-MILITARIZED BECAUSE "THE NEW TURKEY SEEKS FOR ITS NEIGHBORS WHAT IT SEEKS FOR ITSELF." IMMEDIATELY AFTER THIS PRESENTATION, THE GNA VOTED AND RATIFIED THE MONTREUX CONVENTION WITHOUT A VOTE IN DISSENT. THERE WAS ALSO AN INDICATION IN THE GREEK EMBASSY FILES THAT AMBASSADOR POLITIS, THE GREEK AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE, WHO NEGOTIATED AND SIGNED THE MONTREUX CONVENTION, HAD INDICATED THE STATEMENT OF MR. ARAS WAS PART OF A QUID PRO QUO ARRANGEMENT WHEREBY GREECE SUPPORTED THE TURKISH DESIRE TO FORTIFY THE STRAITS IN RETURN FOR ITS OWN FREEDOM TO DEMILITARIZE THE ISLANDS. TZOUNIS ALSO CITED A DOCUMENT FROM THE GREEK FILES WHICH QUOTED ARAS AS SAYING AFTE THE VOTE THAT HE WAS HAPPY THE GNA HAD VOTED REMILITARIZATION OF THE ISLANDS. WHEN TZOUNIS POINTED OUT THE ARAS STATEMENT TO GOT FONOFF SECGEN EREZ, THE LATTER SAID HE WOULD LOOK INTO THE MATTER, BUT THE GOG HEARD NOTHING FURTHER. THE STATEMENT IN QUESTION IS IN VOLUME XII, PAGE 309 OF THE JOURNAL OF MINUTES OF THE GNA FOR THE FIFTH PARLIAMENTARY PERIOD, 81ST SESSION OF JULY 31, 1936.

3. THE SECOND AND CENTRAL GROUP OF ISLANDS INCLUDED MYTILENE, CHIOS, SAMOS AND IKARIA. ARTICLE 13 OF THE TREATY OF LAUSSANE, AS DISTINGUISHED FROM THE LAUSANNE CONVENTION ON THE STRAITS, PARTIALLY DEMILITARIZED THESE ISLANDS. NAVAL BASES OR FORTIFICATIONS WERE PROHIBITED, GREEK MILITARY FORCES WERE LIMITED TO THOSE CALLED TO SERVICE FROM THE ISLAND AND, MOST INTERESTING, OVERFLIGHTS BY GREEK MILITARY ARICRAFT OF THE

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ANOTOLIAN COAST AND BY TURKISH MILITARY AIRCRAFT OF THE ISLANDS WERE SPECIFICALLY FORBIDDEN. THE LEGAL STATUS OF THESE ISLANDS REMAINED UNCHANGED. IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE AMBASSADOR, TZOUNIS ACKNOWLEDGED THAT GREECE HAD PUT FORCES ON THE ISLANDS BUT ONLY SINCE THE CYPRUS CRISIS ERUPTED IN JULY 1974. THESE FORCES INCLUDED MILITARY AIRCRAFT ON LEMNOS. IN ORDER TO CLARIFY THE REASONS FOR THE RECENT TURKISH OVERFLIGHTS OF THESE ISLANDS, THE AMBASSADOR ASKED

WHETHER GREEK AIRCRAFT HAD OVERFLOWN THE TURKISH MAINLAND. TZOUNIS CATEGORICALLY DENIED THAT THIS HAD OCCURRED. TO THE AMBASSADOR'S QUERY AS TO WHETHER THE GOG HAD ADMITTED TO THE GOT ITS MILITARY BUILD-UP ON THESE ISLANDS, TZOUNIS SAID THAT GOT HAD NOT ASKED BUT HAD OVERFLOWN THE ISLANDS, PRESUMABLY PHOTOGRAPHING. TZOUNIS NOTED THAT ARTICLE 13 EXPLICITLY STATED THAT THE RESTRICTIONS ON MILITARIZATION OF THESE ISLANDS WAS "TO ENSURE THE MAINTENANCE OF PEACE.." GREECE AHD ONLY ACTED IN RESPONSE TO TURKISH THREATS AND FELT THAT IT COULD NOT LEAVE THE ISLANDS DEFENSELESS.

4. THE THIRD, AND SOUTHERNMOST GROUP OF ISLANDS WAS THE DODECANNESE. THESE HAD BEEN CEDED TO ITALY BY TURKEY IN ARTICLE 15 OF THE TREATY OF LAUSANNE OF 1923 AND, IN TURN, BY ITALY TO GREECE UNDER ARTICLE 14 OF THE TREATY OF PEACE WITH ITALY OF 1947. TURKEY HAD RENOUNCED ALL RIGHTS AND TITLES TO THESE ISLANDS IN THE TREATY OF LAUSANNE. THUS, TURKEY'S CLAIM TO CONTINENTAL SHELF RESOURCES WEST OF THE DODECANNESE WAS INCOMPATIBLE WITH TREATY UNDERTAKINGS TO WHICH TURKEY SUPPOSEDLY STILL SUBSCRIBED. IN 1931 AND 1932 ITALY AND TURKEY NEGOTIATED TWO PROTOCOLS, ONE COVERING THE SEA BOUNDARY BETWEEN CASTELORIZON AND THE TURKISH MAINLAND AND THE OTHER BETWEEN THE DODECANNESE AND THE ANATOLIAN COAST. TURKEY RATIFIED THE FIRST BUT DID NOT RATIFY THE SECOND. TZOUNIS NOTED THAT THE 1947 TREATY STATED THE DODECANNESE "SHALL BE AND SHALL REMAIN DEMILITARIZED." HE ADDED THAT THE CHARACTER OF THIS DEMILITARIZATION DEFINED IN ANNEX 13, SECTION D OF THE TREATY OF 1947 PROHIBITED ANYTHING LARGER THAN HAND-HELD WEAPONS. TURKEY WAS NOT A SIGNATORY OF THE 1947 TREATY AND THUS WAS NOT A PARTY TO IT. AGAIN, HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT GREECE HAD SENT TROOPS INTO THE DODECANNESE IN ORDER TO DEFEND THEM AFTER REPEATED THREATENING STATEMENTS BY TURKISH LEADERS. HE QUOTED A CONFIDENTIAL

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NUMBER OF STATEMENTS MADE IN THE PAST YEAR BY TURKISH GOVERNMENTAL, POLITICAL, AND MILITARY LEADERS CLAIMING RIGHTS TO THE AEGEAN AND SUGGESTING A KIND OF "MANIFEST DESTINY"

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8218

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ATHENS 2693

EXDIS

FOR TURKEY TO EXTEND ITS BORDERS TO THE CENTRAL AEGEAN, ALL OF WHICH CRETED CONSIDERABLE APPREHENSIONS ABOUT TURKISH INTENTIONS. TZOUNIS COMMENTED THAT ALL THE ISLANDS IN QUESTION WERE PART OF GREECE'S NATIONAL TERRITORY AND THAT THEY WOULD BE DEFENDED, ADDING THAT "THE TURKS MUST KNOW THIS."

5. TO THE AMBASSADOR'S QUESTION REGARDING FORTIFICATIONS ON THE DODECANNES TZOUNIS REPLIED THERE WERE NO PERMANENT FORTIFICATIONS BUT PERHAPS SOME FIELD FORTIFICATIONS. THE AMBASSADOR ASKED IF ASSURANCES FROM TURKEY THAT IT HAD NO AGGRESSIVE INTENT WOULD BE SUFFICIENT TO ALLOW GREECE TO LEAVE THE ISLANDS DEMILITARIZED. TZOUNIS REPLIED THAT ASSURANCES WOULD NOT BE ENOUGH AS THE TURKS WOULD INTERPRET THEM AS THEY SAW FIT. THE AMBASSADOR ASKED WHAT THEN WOULD BE SUFFICIENT AND TZOUNIS SAID RATHER THAN ASSURANCES A TRUE DETENTE WAS NEEDED. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, TZOUNIS STATED THAT TROOPS HAD BEEN SENT TO THE DODECANNES ONLY SINCE JULY 1974, BUT ADDED THAT THEY HAD PROBABLY ALSO BEEN SENT AT THE TIME OF THE 1967 CRISIS. TZOUNIS EXPANDED, SAYING THAT GREECE PLACED TROOPS ON THE ISLANDS ONLY IN TIMES OF CRISIS WHEN THE ISLANDS WERE THREATENED BY TURKEY. TZOUNIS CHARACTERIZED AS WITHOUT FOUNDATION THE TURKISH REFERENCE TO THE "MEGHALI IDEA" AS JUSTIFICATION FOR ITS MILITARY PROVOCATIONS. HE EXPLAINED THAT THE "MEGHALI IDEA" HAD HAD SUBSTANCE ONLY WHEN THERE WAS A DEMOGRAPHIC BASIS, WHEN THERE WERE ONE AND ONE-HALF MILLION GREEKS LIVING IN ANATOLIA. CONFIDENTIAL

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THE AMBASSADOR ASKED IF THERE WAS ANY POSSIBILITY THAT THE TURKS SUSPECTED A GREEK MILITARY MOVE AND TZOUNIS SAID CLEARLY NOT, ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS' STATEMENTS THAT GREECE WOULD NOT INITIATE ANY MILITARY ACTION. TZOUNIS REFERRED TO ANY THOUGHT THAT GREECE MIGHT HAVE AGGRESSIVE INTENTIONS TOWARD THE MAINLAND WHEN IT PUT TROOPS ON THE

ISLANDS AS "INSANE." WHEN THE AMBASSADOR QUERIED TZOUNIS ABOUT POSSIBLE EXCHANGES CONCERNING THE ISLANDS BETWEEN THE GREEK AND TURKISH GOVERNMENTS, TZOUNIS STATED THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO DEMARCHE ON THE ISLANDS SINCE JUNE 1974. AT THAT TIME, THE TURKS HAD MENTIONED THE STATUS OF THE ISLANDS AS ONE OF THE ISSUES THAT IT WISHED TO DISCUSS WHEN TALKS BETWEEN THEN FOREIGN MINISTERS BAYULKEN AND CAVALIERATOS ON OUTSTANDING ISSUES BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WERE AGREED.

6. THE AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT BY ACCIDENT OR BY HAPPENSTANCE SOME SHIP CAPTAIN OR AIRCRAFT PILOT MIGHT TAKE AGGRESSIVE ACTION IN CIRCUMSTANCES THAT WOULD LEAD TO HOSTILITIES WITHOUT THE INTENT TO DO SO ON EITHER SIDE. TZOUNIS REPLIED THAT GREECE WAS EXERCISING RESTRAINT BUT COULD NOT ALLOW OVERFLIGHTS, PARTICULARLY AT LOW LEVEL, WHICH INDUCED PANIC AMONG THE CIVILIAN POPULACE ON THE ISLANDS AND CRETED UNCERTAINTIES WHICH HAD ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS THROUGHOUT GREECE, SUCH AS BANK WITHDRAWALS, HOARDING AND DISCOURAGEMENT OF THE IMPORTANT TOURIST TRADE. THE AMBASSADOR ASKED IF THE GOG WISHED THE U.S. TO DO ANYTHING AND TZOUNIS REPLIED NEGATIVELY, SAYING THAT THE GOG JUST WISHED THE U.S. TO BE INFORMED.

7. TZOUNIS REFERRED TO RECENT REPORTS THAT GOG HAD RECEIVED FROM ITS CONGEN IN ISTANBUL THAT THE TURKS WERE QUITLY, BY INDIVIDUAL CALLS, MOBILIZING FOUR CLASSES, THOSE OF 1948, 1949, 1950 AND 1952. THIS, IN CONJUNCTION WITH REPORTS THAT TURKISH HEADQUARTERS AT THE DIVISION AND CORPS LEVEL WRE MOVING TO FIELD POSITIONS IN THRACE AS WELL AS THE RECENT PUBLIC REPORT THAT TURKEY WAS CREATING A NEW FIELD ARMY COMMAND FOR THE AEGEAN AREA HEADQUARTERS IN IZMIR, GAVE THE GOG CONSIDERABLE CAUSE FOR CONERN. THE AMBASSADOR ASKED WHETHER TZOUNIS FELT THE TURKS WERE PLANNING SOMETHING FOR THEIR OWN REASONS OR BECAUSE THEY SUSPECTED GREEK INTENTIONS. TZOUNIS FELT THAT TURKEY WAS TRYING TO INTIMIDATE GREECE AS

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WELL AS OVERFLYING THE ISLANDS TO SEE WHAT GREECE WAS DOING. THE AMBASSADOR SUGGESTED THAT THE TURKS PERHAPS WERE SIMPLY OBSERVING THE GREEKS BUT WOULD NOT ACTUALLY INITIATE HOSTILITIES. TZOUNIS HOPED THIS WAS THE CASE, ADDING THAT ANY HOSTILITIES WOULD HAVE VERY ADVERSE REPERCUSSIONS FOR ALL CONCERNED INCLUDING THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE SOVIETS, WHO REGARDED THE DARDANELLES AS VITAL TO THEIR INTERESTS. HE RECALLED THAT THE RUSSIAN FLEET HAD HAD A BASE IN POROS DURING THE 19TH CENTURY AND ONLY SOVIET INTERNAL DIFFICULTIES IN THE PERIOD SINCE THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION HAD ACCUSTOMED PEOPLE TO THE CONCEPT THAT THE SOVIETS DID NOT HAVE A CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN THE MEDITERRANEAN, AND THAT THE INTRODUCTION OF THE SOVIET SQUADRON INTO THE MEDITERRANEAN IN RECENT YEARS

WAS A REASSERTION OF AN OLD INTEREST.

8. TZOUNIS SAW A PATTERN IN THE EFFORT BY THE TURKS OVER THE LAST DECADE TO RE-ALIGN THE NATO COMMAND BOUNDARIES IN THE AEGEAN, WHICH HAD BEEN DRAWN TO COINCIDE WITH THE TERRITORIAL SEA LIMITS OF TURKEY IN THE AEGEAN WHEN GREECE AND TURKEY ENTERED NATO. THIS EFFORT, THE TURKISH ASSERTION OF A CLAIM TO THE CONTINENTAL SHELF, THE UNILATERAL EXTENSION OF THE TURKISH FIR, AND THEN THE PROVOCATIVE OVERFLIGHTS ALL APPEARED TO GREECE TO BE AN EFFORT BY TURKEY TO ESTABLISH DEFACTO JOINT OR UNILATERAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE TURKISH ARMED FORCES IN THE AEGEAN. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT IF THERE WAS A POSSIBILITY OF A CONFRONTATION AND PERHAPS HOSTILITIES AS A RESULT OF MISUNDERSTANDING BY EACH SIDE OF THE OTHER'S INTENTIONS, THIRD PARTIES COULD PLAY A USEFUL ROLE. TZOUNIS, IMPLICITLY ACCEPTING THIS, COMMENTED THAT THE TURKS CALCULATED THAT GREECE WAS IN A PERIOD OF WEAKNESS AFTER SEVEN YEARS OF POLITICAL ISOLATION, BECAUSE OF MATERIEL DEFICIENCIES IN GREECE'S ARMED FORCES, PARTICULARLY THE EARLIER FAILURE TO RENEW THE AIRCRAFT INVENTORY OF THE HAF, AND BECAUSE OF THE ASSUMED WEAKNESS OF MILITARY LEADERSHIP IN GREECE FOLLOWING THE MANY TURNOVERS OF RECENT YEARS. THE AMBASSADOR'S SUGGESTION THAT GREECE'S WITHDRAWAL FROM NATO'S MILITARY WING MIGHT ALSO MAKE IT APPEAR MORE VULNERABLE DREW A GRUDGING AGREEMENT FROM TZOUNIS.

9. TZOUNIS THEN MENTIONED REPORTS THE GOG HAD RECEIVED THAT TURKEY MIGHT FEEL BECAUSE OF INCIPIENT DEFICIENCIES IN  
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ITS OWN MATERIAL READINESS THE PERIOD UP TO JUNE WAS THE MOST OPPORTUNE TIME TO ACT. THE AMBASSADOR ASKED WHY THEN DID FONMIN BITSIOS NOT WISH THE USG TO MAKE THE PUBLIC STATEMENT DISCUSSED IN DECEMBER IN BRUSSELS, AND TZOUNIS ATTRIBUTED THIS RELUCTANCE TO BITSIOS' FEELING THAT THE CYPRIOTS MIGHT THINK THAT THE GOG WAS ABANDONING THEM IN FAVOR OF A USG GUARANTEE OF ITS OWN SECURITY. TZOUNIS REFERRED TO THE UNITED STATES INTEREST IN PREVENTING HOSTILITIES IN THE AEGEAN AND THE AMBASSADOR RECALLED THAT IN BOTH DECEMBER AND EARLY MARCH THE SECRETARY OF STATE HAD INDICATED TO FOREIGN MINISTER BITSIOS THAT THE SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE GREEK ISLANDS IN THE AEGEAN WAS DIFFERENT FROM CYPRUS AND THAT THE USG COULD NOT TOLERATE A MILITARY ACTION BY TURKEY THERE. THE AMBASSADOR CAUTIONED TZOUNIS THAT THE GOG WOULD LOSE THE SUPPORT OF THE WORLD IF IT INITIATED ANY MILITARY ACTION ITSELF. TZOUNIS REPLIED THAT THE USG COULD REST ASSURED THAT GREECE WOULD NOT START ANYTHING BUT ADDED THAT IT COULD NOT ALLOW THE OVERFLIGHTS TO CONTINUE.

9. WE WILL BE COMMENTING ON SEPTTEL ON QUESTIONS POSED IN

REFTEL.  
KUBISCH

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